



# Manifestos For Education

The following are the manifestos for the candidates running to be one of your full-time officers for the year 21/22. These officers will represent yourselves to the university and lead on campaigns to make student life better.

This officer role will champion the following areas of work but not limited to:

- Be the lead student representative on academic and related issues concerning the development of the Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught (PGT) and Postgraduate Research (PGR) experience to the University.
- Be the lead student officer responsible for responding to national education and employability issues and bringing these to Union Executive Committee.
- Oversee the work of Union in relation to employability and enterprise projects.
- In collaboration the Vice President (Welfare and Community), actively address the inequalities within academia.

Manifestos are listed in alphabetical order

## Gayatri Shewani

### Gayatri Shewani as your Vice President of Education 2021

- I am a second year Entrepreneurship and Management student with a minor in Fine Art, which means that I will be held accountable for the changes I make as VP in my final year.
- I am an Indian international student, giving me a more accurate insight into the struggles of students away from home and those who have to work from different time zones.
- In first year, I was an Academic Representative, elected Faculty Rep of the Management School, and Undergraduate Senate representative, giving me experience of the inner workings of the university and knowledge of how best to approach student issues in order to get results.
- At 17 I led and organised an H1N1 and influenza vaccination drive worth over £57000 for 6,000 underprivileged villagers, proving my affinity for leadership and organisation to efficiently fulfil the role of VP, as well as resilience to overcome setbacks.
- I am currently a mentor for first year students in my course and understand their struggles due to the pandemic
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The University has been trying to replicate the pre-COVID educational experience. Instead, they need to ADAPT to the circumstances

The pandemic has revealed Lancaster University's attitude towards students and staff. This manifesto urges the university to take responsibility for their ignorance and challenges them into creating a more supportive environment. This manifesto provides an efficacious plan to resolve key student issues this coming academic year.

### **Research**

The contents of this manifesto have been decided by YOU. I have conducted research by interviewing individuals from 14 different departments, including a blend of local and international students, currently at home and in Lancaster.

This is why I aim to overcome the effects of the pandemic including demotivation, decreased confidence, and burnout by focusing on:

- **Communication**
- **Support and Wellbeing**

Interviews and more information on issues and solutions can be viewed on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) @GayatriforVPEducation where you will also get the opportunity to speak with me and inform me of any other concerns. This campaign is about **you** for **you**.

Changes suggested must continue post pandemic to ensure students can readjust to campus life, make up for lost time, and return to the best version of Lancaster University

## Communication

- Interdepartmental communication to share good practice - some departments have adjusted to coronavirus better than others. This allows departments to share effective teaching methods, allowing them to learn from and support each other to deliver a better learning experience.
- A restructured Academic Rep system - all students will have the ability to put forward complaints and suggestions via the student portal. This will;
  - Ensure all student concerns are heard
  - Gauge the magnitude of each problem and allow a better response
  - Protect Academic Reps from backlash from staff since they will be associated with the solution rather than the problem
- Academic Reps will have monthly meetings with department heads, with student access to the transcript, ensuring transparency.
  - Ensures departments do not suppress student complaints
  - Staff will have to immediately implement improvements they have promised
  - Academic Reps' work will receive more recognition
- Clear, honest communication by staff regarding future planning, assessment style and dates, and whether they have a plan.
- Outline of what our tuition fees contribute to.

## Support

- Staff mental health support
  - Increases quality of education, allowing more interactive classes and increased care and attention from lecturers
- #DecoloniseEducation
  - All university academics must be educated on the history of colonialism, distinct legacies of colonialism related to their discipline, and possess skills to identify appropriate actions and approaches that are effective in developing decolonial practices in their modules
  - Informed lecturers lead to more inclusive learning experiences and more available resources for all students.
- All BAME students will have access to tutors of their ethnic background
  - This will create a comfortable environment for BAME students, and motivate them to better partake in group work and social aspects of university, benefitting all.
- International Students
  - Financial support in the form of scholarships available to international students - this is currently only limited to UK students
- Standardised quality of education, including but not limited to;
  - Lecture material to be posted the Friday before the relevant week
  - Weekly drop in sessions
  - Regular 1on1 contact from tutors with in-depth feedback
  - Assessment detailed to be given at the start of term
  - Supporting material including reading list, question banks, case studies, self-check quizzes

I want this campaign to accurately channel student voices, therefore I am inviting all students to inform me of your educational concerns on [Instagram](#) @GayatriforVPEducation

# Ignacio Granados Zavala

I have always asked myself, how does the World work? How people can access the best possible education? What makes a good education system? Ans specially, how can the current education be improved?

This is the reason why decided to experienced different education system and moved to the United Kingdom to study my Bachelor's degree. I chose to study PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics) in order to answer all these questions. Studying this degree has allowed me to interconnect the different political, economical and philosophical aspects of societies and countries around the world. It allowed me to link the economies and cultures with the education and its access. I am originally from Madrid, Spain. However, I decided to study my undergraduate degree here, at Lancaster University. After experiencing this education system, I thought that I needed to expand my horizons a little bit more. Consequently, I decided to move beyond Europe, and complete my second year abroad at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia. I have benefited greatly from the experience of three different education systems, the Spanish, English and Australian.

Moreover, I have worked for a company in Spain sourcing private funding for international cooperation projects, volunteered in Cambodia with an NGO and worked several years in England as an international group leader. I have participated in a business consultancy project in Lancaster helping the client with its marketing strategy and increasing its sales. I have been an interviewer for The Times Final Year Survey 2021 (Junior researcher) and completed a market research and analysis for Global Student Accommodation, gathering data on the industry and competitive landscape using a methodological approach. I am now the business development manager of a project in Ghana searching for Corporate Social Responsibility's opportunities within relevant businesses.

Being part of different societies on campus, the Hiking Club, the Hip Hop and Breakdance society, Business Consultancy Society, Lancaster Student Union, and volunteered in Lancaster, made me realised of the importance of these bodies for the student body. As I have studied in three different education systems, Spanish, English, and Australian, I am aware of the different advantages and disadvantages of these. I am fully aware of the student's necessities as I am part of the Student Union. I am currently an academic student representative in the PPR (Philosophy, Politics and Economics) department, attending regularly with department staff to discuss any issues and changes affecting the student body. I also Informed students and the Students' Union about the agenda of department meetings and the actions consequently taken. I Worked closely with the Students' Union and other elected representatives, to help improve the overall student experience. I was part of the Student Advisory Group during my study abroad year attending regular meetings to provide feedback on student experience to Executive College and Academic Committed and other areas of the university. I gave advice on how to improve the university's education system, experience of studying and university life.

To conclude, I think I am qualified and would be extremely excited if getting selected for the Vice-President (Education) position. I would love to improve the academic experiences of students and assure students quality assurance, learning support and employability.

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# Don't be a Turkey, Vote for Perky!

About me:

**Hi, I'm Jake Perkins (he/they) but most of my mates call me Perky. I'm a final year Politics and International Relations student and I'm running to be your next VP Education.**

During my time at Lancaster I've served on society execs, contributed to Bailrigg FM and been involved in running in the Students with Disabilities forum. Covid has shown both the shortcomings and the strengths of Lancaster Uni. Things that were dismissed as impractical or were timetabled set years to be implement, like online, only submission, have been implemented much quicker. But the crisis has laid bare some of the deficiencies of the University, like the lack of safety net when many students are unable to access campus. The Union does its best work when it listens on what student's want and need, I will always strive to make your voices heard at all levels of decision making.

The academic rep system is a powerful tool for students to affect change in departments. Reps are invaluable resource that cannot be overlooked. I want to keep up the amazing work they've been doing and work with them to become more effective and efficient.

I will to be open and accessible to as many students as possible, I will always be ready to listen to your concerns about your education. I'm incredibly passionate about improving the academic experience for all students.

As a student with disabilities, a commitment to equality is one of my core values because everyone deserves to get the most out of their time at Uni with as few barriers as possible. I'm keen to see action taken on student, led education Campaigns, such as decolonising the curriculum, tackling black attainment gap and other structural discrimination issues that arise. Also, I think the Union and Uni can be doing more to support mature students and postgrad students, by breaking down educational barrier for them any parental and care responsibilities. I want to create an academic environment where every student has the equal opportunity to thrive and succeed.

These are my policies:

## **Action on Accessibility**

- - Making lecture recordings 'opt, out' rather than 'opt, in' for academics to maximise the number recorded.
  - Introduce a new system for students to request digitisation of physical materials to expand the availability of digital library resources for all.
  - Captioning all videos to make learning easier students, especially those with disabilities or those whose first language isn't English.
  - Implement the 'Improve your Learning' report's recommendations.
  - Empowering students to make sure that course materials, e.g. readings, are made available at minimum 7 days ahead of teaching.
  - Empower Academic Reps to hold their departments to account in meetings their accessibility requirements through students' surveys and audits.
  - Review the Inclusive Learning and Support Plan (ILSP) system, so the process is streamlined and easier to students.
  - Better training for staff to meet students ILSP needs, and create a clear procedure for students to follow if staff are not following their ILSP
  - Support a review of the current system of reporting accessibility issues.
  - Encourage interdepartmental dialogue to support joint honours, natural sciences and first year students, to improve your experience with regards to workload and clashes.

## Supporting Education Campaigns

- - Support work of the 'Why is my Curriculum so white?' campaign and the BAME Officer to work to decolonise the curriculum so your degree is inclusive of all topics.
  - Develop a strategy to tackle the problem of the Black attainment gap.
  - Ensure that all departments provide resources, such as modules, workshops and presentations, for career pathways to give you the boost you need to start your career after university.
  - Maintain an ongoing and open dialogue with unions and other unions as to how staff and students can best support one another.
  - Give students the opportunity through LUSU to widen participation from their communities.

## Improve Support for Mature Students and Postgrad Students

- - Promote study skills and refresher courses, such as how to access the library digitally, how to navigate moodle and other systems, how to write in a contemporary academic style.
  - Provide greater support for flexible study, including PGR, to help students fulfil care and childcare commitments, such as having a maternity and paternity leave policy specifically for student parents and carers.
  - Give students the ability to take short notice and short, term leave, without a fee penalty, to fulfil urgent parental and caring responsibilities.

[For more information check out my Facebook page](#)

# Matthew Cartwright

Hi! I'm Matthew Cartwright, and I'm running for VP Education! I'm in my fourth year at Lancaster University. I studied as a law undergrad here, and now I am a postgrad.

During my time at the University, my other roles have involved serving as Chair and Democracy officer for Fylde JCR and also more recently running LA1TV as co-station manager. These roles have meant close interaction with the Union, especially at LA1TV this year, as we helped deliver live freshers' events working closely with Union staff and FTOs.

As a result of this experience, it is not lost on me how so many first-year and second-year students have not seen the true university experience, both socially and academically.

This is something we must see change as restrictions ease and has helped guide my manifesto:

### Academic Recovery Post-Lockdown

I will fight and lobby the University on the basis of the issues below:

- Unsustainable Student Number Growth- I fear that the University will use the widespread adoption of remote learning to justify expanding student numbers further as they have in previous years. This resulted in lecture theatres being overcapacity, with students turned away from their own lectures or made to sit in aisles.
- However, with student numbers lower, the University may seek to overcompensate numbers next year in order to make up for financial losses as a result of the pandemic. As the University's largest source of income is us!

- Oversaturation of students on courses may make the experience much less individual and can affect the way in which students learn and progress on their course.
- Remote Learning- Microsoft Teams and Moodle are currently the core infrastructure of everyone's course. There have been some benefits to this, as I'm sure many have enjoyed getting up 5 minutes before a seminar and pretending to be awake while cameraless and muted!
  - However, the reality is this is not £9,250 worth of tuition. Part of the University's justification for the price of tuition is the facilities and campus. Additionally, many come to University for the experience of moving and living on campus and joining a vibrant community and should expect in-person teaching next year if restrictions lift by June 21st. Remote learning must not be used as an excuse to dilute the quality of students' academic experience at Lancaster.
  - Lectures should be recorded in theatres and made available for everyone on Moodle. This was a significant positive of remote learning and can help students catch up and revise.
- Paperless Submissions- assessments have been paperless during the pandemic. This should be made permanent. Ink and paper all carry an unnecessary carbon footprint, and even if small, cumulatively, it adds up.

#### Our Academic Community-

We must ensure our community is vibrant

- Our Academic Rep System must be supported as it provides a way to lobby your departments. Many do not even know their reps, so a small but significant push is to further advertise via departments and media. Your reps should also feature as contacts on your moodle page, along with other key contacts. Engagement with the system is what is key to its success.
- Anonymous Submission Forms about your academic experiences also allow for increased engagement. This can allow me to see the issues as they come in across departments and seek to rectify issues when they arise, rather than playing catch up.
- Liberation Groups – The University experience must not suffer detriment due to race, age, gender, sexuality or religious beliefs. This is especially true of academia, which must not suffer from unconscious bias in any way. As VP Education, it is essential I work with liberation groups to produce a better academic experience for those represented by Lancaster's vibrant liberation communities. This includes the PTOs, who are often not given credit for the work they do.
- Postgraduates- Having been an undergrad and postgrad here at Lancaster, it is key to ensure postgraduates are included as a valued part of our university community. I will seek to accommodate the differing experiences and needs of undergrad and postgrad students.

Ultimately, my manifesto aims to rejuvenate students' academic experience post-lockdown and empower our academic community.

The pandemic has made clear the nature of higher education today as being emphasised on profitability and not service. Consequently, we must fight for every penny of our tuition and not become a financial casualty of the post lockdown world.

Be sure to check out my manifesto here which will contain links to my campaign media:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1acv150p4W8e8LS9pvwoUw84DnkyhZZHM5JokcsXQQrc/edit?usp=s haring>

#CartwRIGHTforTheUnion

